

Message from Supervisor McKay

Preserving our neighborhoods' quality of life is a priority and since taking office I've focused on making improvements to how the County handles these issues. While there's been real progress over the past few years, we still have a ways to go. For example, if there's a code violation that needs to be resolved, it shouldn't be hard for residents to make a complaint and it shouldn't be hard for County staff to handle that complaint.

Until July 1, that was not always the case. The County had a stovepipe system that worked well years ago but was no longer flexible or robust enough to handle the complaints typical of our growing County. Different types of violations were handled by different agencies so someone living next to a house with multiple violations had to contact several different departments, reporting the appropriate violation to each one. Two years ago when the recession hit and we looked at County agencies for budget savings, I insisted that our code enforcement programs be preserved and made more efficient and responsive to neighborhood needs.

The end result is the Consolidated County Services program under the Department of Code Compliance that became operational on July 1. This new department investigates most neighborhood quality of life complaints including boarding houses (overcrowding), parking in the grass, junk in the yard, unmowed grass, graffiti, building without permits, and hoarding. Other violations handled by this department include blight, property maintenance, noise, residential fire code, and other zoning violations. The new arrangement streamlines code enforcement under one umbrella, including the former Strike Teams. It has only one purpose and one priority—to investigate and resolve code violations that diminish our collective quality of life.

How is this different from what we had before? For the County, it streamlines the system and allows complaints that fall under different sections of the County's code to be worked simultaneously. Residents no longer have to figure out which agency handles which violation before they can report it. Now, you can go to the County's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code/ to file a report online or call 703-324-1300.